



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

March 26, 2004

The Honorable Gary Locke
Washington State Governor
Legislative Building
Post Office Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Locke,

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health in response to your letter of March 9, 2004 concerning revisions to the Board's onsite wastewater rules.

We on the Board appreciate the personal attention you have given to this rule revision process. We share your interest in providing the highest possible level of protection to Washington's unique marine waters and abundant shellfish resources, and we recognize that failing or improperly maintained or operated small onsite septic systems are one of the many contributors to the degradation of marine waters and shellfish beds.

Your letter requests that the Board and the Department continue to work with stakeholders to determine how the draft rules can be strengthened to give greater protection to marine waters. This work has already begun through the work of the Department. The Board supports this effort and looks forward to contributing. I also understand that Ron Shultz in the Governor's Policy Office will convene an interagency work group to develop a strategy to address marine pollution and that this group will consider policy changes that are outside the scope of the Board's current rule making. Board staff will be active participants in this process.

As you know, onsite operation and maintenance is a complicated policy issue that has been extensively scrutinized by stakeholders and policy makers. Nevertheless, the Board believes that additional collaborative and creative efforts are likely to result in credible, workable ideas about ways to strengthen the proposed rule. The Board is therefore very supportive of continued work and will give serious consideration to suggestions that arise from it.

Thanks you again for your interest in the Board's work and for the concern you continue to show for the health of Washington State—its people and its natural resources.

Sincerely,

Linda Lake
Chair, Washington State Board of Health

cc: Tom Fitzsimmons, Governor's Office
Ron Shultz, Executive Policy Office
Washington State Board of Health Members
Mary Selecky, Department of Health
Steve Meyer, Department of Health